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# U.S. wants \$30 million for Contra arms aid

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A Reagan administration task force is expected to urge President Reagan to ask Congress for up to \$30 million in military aid for the anti-Sandinista guerrillas in Nicaragua.

The proposal will go to President Reagan's desk for a signature within the next several days, senior administration officials said yesterday.

The administration is said to be considering whether to seek approval for sending conventional anti-aircraft weapons or small heat-seeking missiles to counter the advanced Soviet Mi-24 Hind combat helicopters now used by the Nicaraguan army.

The task force further wants the president to seek money to pay for training forces to fight the Nicaraguan army along the Nicaraguan-Honduran border.

The National Security Council and an interdepartmental task force

have been considering the switch to military aid for the rebels for several months. The figure to be sought for military aid is expected to range between \$25 million and \$30 million.

The administration has been talking to members of both houses since December.

An administration request for renewed military aid would set off a new controversy, but there is wide agreement that congressional sentiment has shifted. Support for resumption of military aid is believed to be growing as disillusionment with the Marxist government grows.

This disillusionment, say congressional sources, is attributed to the Sandinista suppression of civil liberties, the crackdown on the Roman Catholic Church and Sandinista support for the terrorist group M-19 in Colombia.

The last military assistance received by the resistance forces fighting the Marxists in Managua was \$24 million paid out in 1984. Last

year, the administration, reversing an earlier vote in the House, won approval of \$27 million restricted to medical supplies, clothing and other "non-lethal" aid.

The House, over the fierce protests of Speaker Thomas P. O'Neill Jr. and the Democratic leadership, reversed itself after Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega went to Moscow to seek military aid to fight the resistance, or Contras, within a week after the House of Representatives had refused to extend aid to the resistance.

The decision to seek military aid once more has been reached at the planning level, requiring only a final signature by President Reagan, the officials said.

White House spokesman Larry Speakes told reporters yesterday that the president had not yet decided whether to seek military aid, but other sources said a decision had

been reached and only the exact amount to be sought was still being discussed.

One source familiar with White House strategy said the Reagan administration wants to restore military aid as a means of leverage to influence the way the Contras conduct the resistance.

But, the source said, the resistance is not so much in need of military hardware or small arms as of leadership and a closer identification with American aims in the region.

Among other things, officials said, Washington wants to have an fighters conform to human rights practices espoused by the United States.

The administration also wants a stronger connection with the leaders of the resistance for intelligence purposes and to be sure they listen to U.S. concerns about how the war should be prosecuted.

One senior administration official said yesterday there is already some support on Capitol Hill for resuming military support for the anti-Managua forces when the \$27 million in humanitarian aid runs out in March.

But the return to military assistance instead of non-lethal U.S. aid is considered likely to encounter opposition, especially in the House.

Administration sources said relations between the United States and democratic leader Adolfo Calero and other rebels are generally good. But the resistance forces are thought to be much more likely to heed the advice of the United States if there is public legislative support for their cause.

The humanitarian aid now being sent to the battle area is helpful but the resistance wants Washington to provide military support as well as medicine, blankets and shoes, the officials said.